

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT OF REP. EDWARD J. MARKEY (D-MA) CELEBRATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

“Thirty years ago America was faced with the very real possibility that our national symbol, the Bald Eagle, would become extinct. But led by the foresight of Rep. John Dingell (D-MI) and others, Congress passed the Endangered Species Act, and it was signed into law by Republican President Richard Nixon on December 28, 1973. In 2003, thirty years after enactment, the Bald Eagle is just one of the species that has been pulled back from the brink of extinction by this crucial environmental law.

“Although detractors of the law doubt its effectiveness, over forty percent of the 1,260 species listed are now stable or improving. Eight species have been removed from the list, and 25 are approaching their recovery goals. When compared with extinction for the grizzly bear, the peregrine falcon, the metalmark butterfly, the Maguire primrose, or any of the other protected species on the list, I believe the Endangered Species Act has been an incredible success.

“But like all of our environmental laws under the Bush Administration, the Endangered Species Act is under attack. Just yesterday, the Department of Interior released a final rule that would “streamline” the required consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service on endangered species habitat when any agency or logging company is thinning the forest under the President’s so-called Healthy Forest Initiative. Essentially the rule will allow the Fish and Wildlife Service, the government’s experts on wildlife and habitat protection, to turn over their responsibilities to other agencies without the mandate or expertise to protect species and their habitat. Unfortunately, I think this will be the first of many attacks on the Endangered Species Act that we will see in the coming year from the Bush Administration and the Republicans in Congress.

“The American people love wildlife and wild places, and they want them to remain protected. What’s important for wildlife – clean air, clean water, and open spaces – is also important for the health and recreation of people. And the American people are not going to let Congress forget that.”

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